



**Santa Rosa General Plan 2050**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## COMMUNITY VISION

The community's vision for the future, developed in Phase 2 of the project, helped to frame the Preferred Alternative (Phase 4); inform new and updated General Plan goals, policies, and actions; and ensure that the General Plan fully addresses the needs and desires of the community. The vision is made up of 13 complementary ideals.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

A general plan is a city's road map for the future. It describes a community's aspirations and identifies strategies for managing preservation and change. General Plan 2050 was developed in close collaboration with the community and with oversight and direction from the Planning Commission and City Council in a multiyear process involving several phases:




















- » **Phase 1:** Project Initiation and Community Involvement Strategy (*Complete*)
- » **Phase 2:** Existing Conditions Analysis and Visioning (*Complete*)
- » **Phase 3:** Land Use and Circulation Alternatives (*Complete*)
- » **Phase 4:** Preferred Alternative (*Complete*)
- » **Phase 5:** Draft 2050 General Plan (*Complete*)
- » **Phase 6:** Environmental Analysis (*In Progress*)
- » **Phase 7:** Public Review and Adoption (*In Progress*)
- » **Phase 8:** Additional Amendments to City Documents (*Upcoming*)

## General Plan 2050 Contents

Santa Rosa General Plan 2050 consolidates the eight State-mandated elements of a general plan into five chapters that address both required and optional General Plan topics. The sixth and final chapter, Housing, was prepared through a separate process as State law requires it to be updated every eight years and the current Housing Element was adopted and certified in Spring 2023, covering the planning period through 2031. General Plan 2050 does not involve any amendments to the Housing Element.

### Chapters

■ Required    
 ■ 2030 GP    
 ■ New, not required

<b>LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	 Land Use				
<b>URBAN DESIGN, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, AND ART AND CULTURE</b>	 Urban Design	 Historic Preservation	 Art and Culture	 Hillside Policies	
<b>CIRCULATION, OPEN SPACE, CONSERVATION, AND GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION</b>	 Circulation	 Open Space	 Conservation	 Greenhouse Gas Reduction	
<b>SAFETY, CLIMATE RESILIENCE, NOISE, AND PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES</b>	 Safety	 Climate Resilience	 Public Services and Facilities	 Noise	
<b>HEALTH, EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE</b>	 Community Health	 Equity	 Environmental Justice	 Parks	 Youth, Family, and Seniors
<b>HOUSING</b>	 Housing				

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

General Plan 2050 is made up of goals, policies, and actions that work together to achieve the community’s future vision.

### Goal, Policy, and Action Hierarchy





## General Plan Priority Areas and Populations

A number of goals, policies, and actions in the General Plan give priority to specific areas or populations in Santa Rosa. Though a goal, policy, or action may apply broadly, this prioritization means that the City will first concentrate efforts on historically underserved communities and/or core neighborhoods to advance key aims of environmental justice, social equity, and complete neighborhoods. These priority areas and populations are Equity Priority Populations, Equity Priority Areas, and Areas of Change.

**Equity Priority Populations** are groups identified by the City as having characteristics that contribute to vulnerability and/or the likelihood of being underserved in a variety of areas, including environmental justice, equity, health, and safety. These populations are:

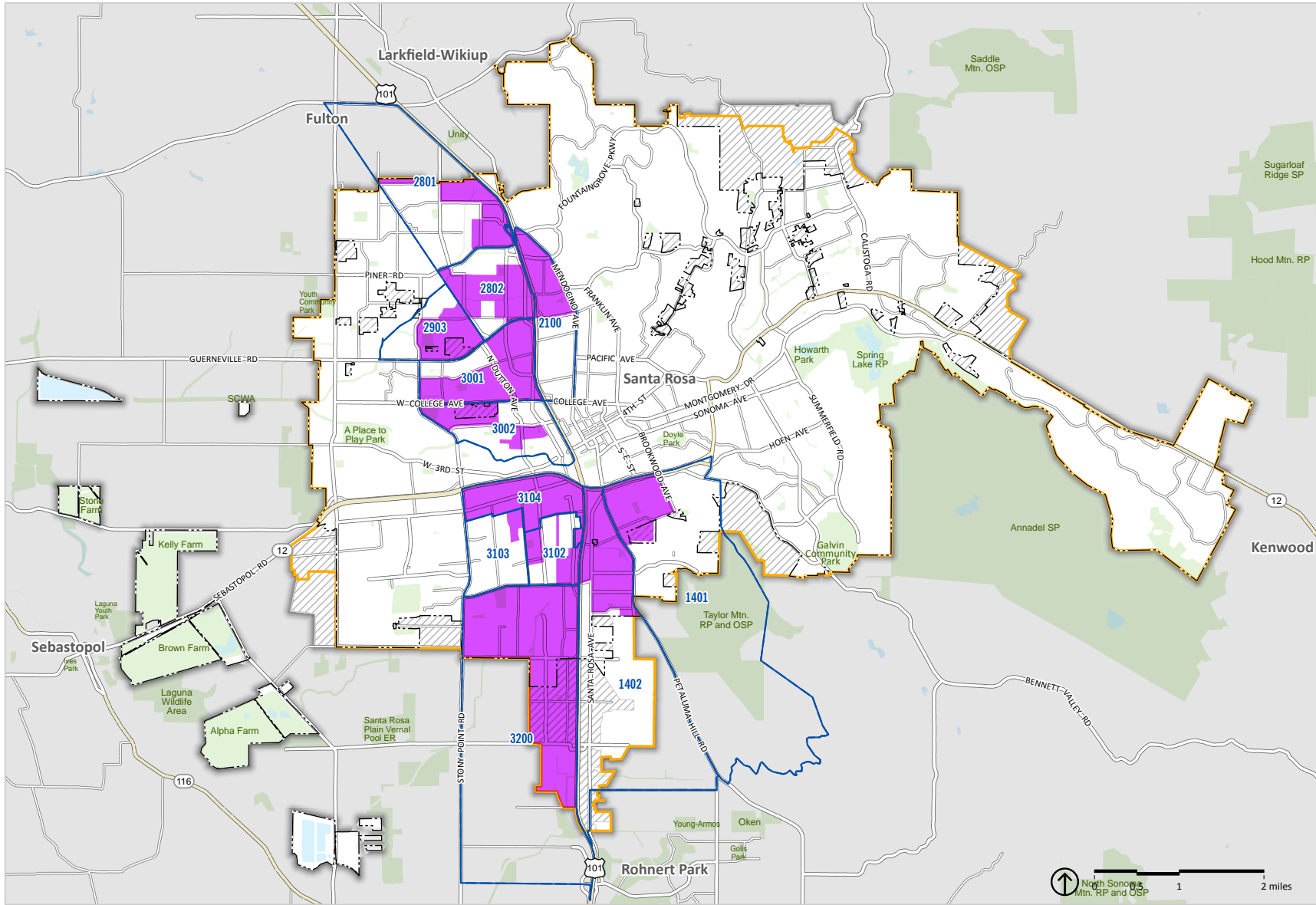
1. Low-income individuals and families
2. Racial or ethnic groups experiencing disparate health outcomes
3. Seniors, children, youth, and young adults
4. Individuals with disabilities
5. Immigrants and refugees
6. Outdoor workers and farmworkers
7. Individuals who have limited English proficiency
8. Unhoused people
9. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, asexual, and other LGBTQIA+ communities
10. Individuals who are incarcerated or who have been incarcerated

Some goals, policies, and actions prioritize one or more Equity Priority Populations to support equitable outcomes for all residents.

**Equity Priority Areas** or EPAs are areas in Santa Rosa where residents suffer most from economic, health, and environmental burdens. EPAs are identified following Guidance from the State tool, CalEnviroScreen 4.0, and additional input from community members and stakeholders. This General Plan addresses environmental justice needs pursuant to SB 1000 and health and equity considerations of EPAs with goals, policies, and actions in each chapter that prioritize EPAs, as appropriate. Chapter 6, "Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice," has the highest concentration of these goals, policies, and actions.







### Equity Priority Areas

- City Limits
- City Sphere of Influence
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Planning Area
- Equity Priority Areas
- Census Tracts Containing Equity Priority Areas

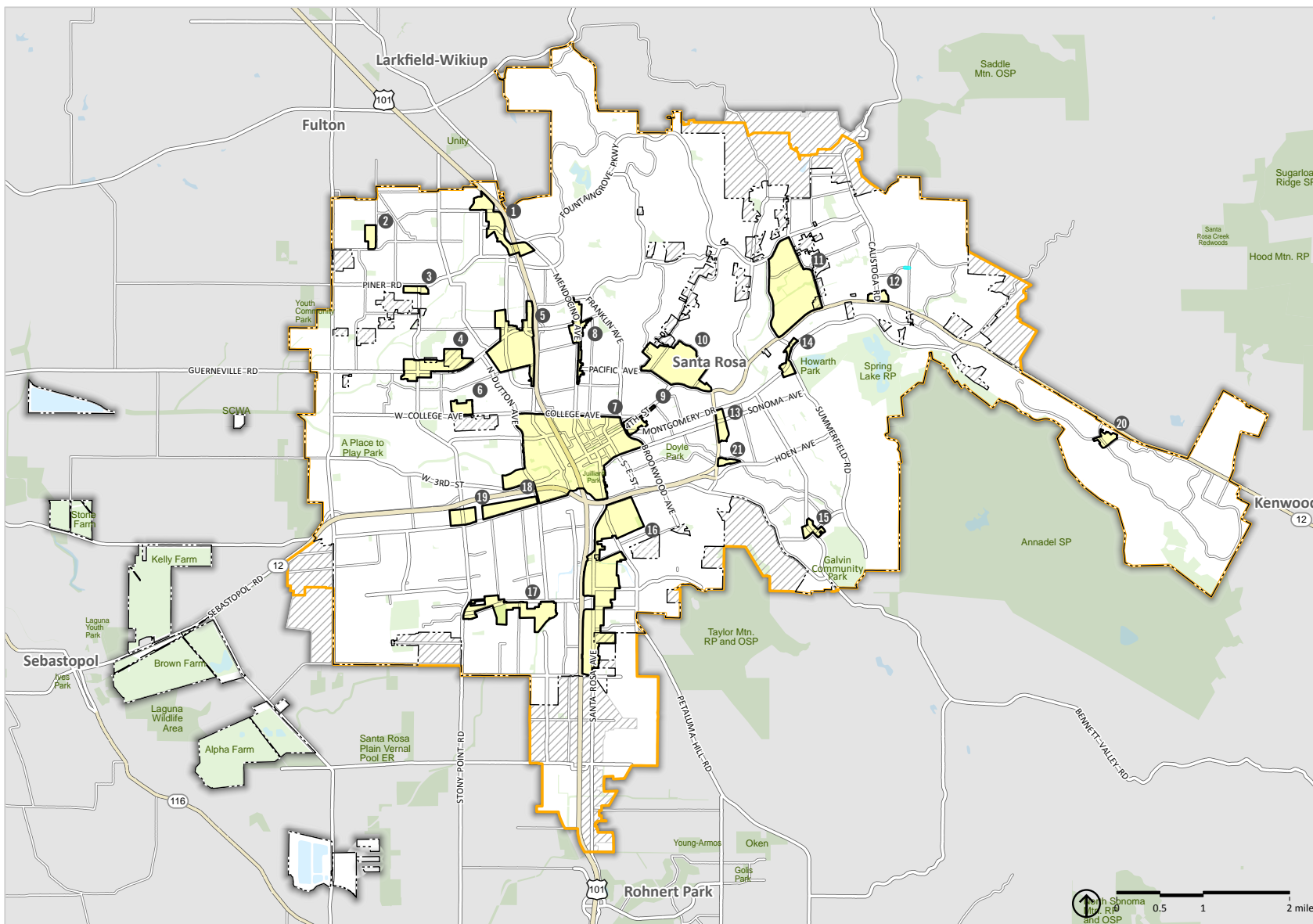
Source: City of Santa Rosa 2023



**Areas of Change** were identified in the Preferred Alternative process (phase 4). This community- favored approach to land use planning maintains existing designations while prioritizing development in 21 specific Areas of Change, where the City will focus efforts to address housing, services, connectivity, and/or infrastructure needs to help make these complete neighborhoods. As such, some goals, policies, and actions prioritize implementation in Areas of Change.



## Areas of Change



- City Limits
  - City Sphere of Influence
  - Urban Growth Boundary
  - Planning Area
  - Areas of Change
- 1 Fountain Grove/Mendocino Interchange
  - 2 Francisco Avenue
  - 3 Rosewood Village
  - 4 Marlow Center and Lance Drive Annexation
  - 5 Coddington
  - 6 West College Neighborhood Center
  - 7 Downtown Station Area
  - 8 Mendocino Corridor
  - 9 4th Street Corridor
  - 10 Flamingo Center
  - 11 Montecito
  - 12 St. Francis Shopping Center
  - 13 Montgomery Village
  - 14 Howarth Commercial
  - 15 Bennett Valley
  - 16 Santa Rosa Marketplace/South Park
  - 17 Hearn Corridor
  - 18 Roseland
  - 19 Stony Point Circle
  - 20 Oakmont
  - 21 Southeast Greenway

Source: City of Santa Rosa 2023



## 2. LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

How land is used in Santa Rosa can make a big difference in how people feel about and interact in local neighborhoods and in how the local economy operates. General Plan 2050 seeks to reinforce local pride, increase local investment, and bolster the vitality of the city as a whole.

### Land Use and Economic Development in the Plan

The Land Use and Economic Development chapter of the General Plan supports thoughtful land use

planning and economic development strategies to enhance and build on neighborhood assets, address current challenges, increase economic and environmental vitality, increase personal opportunity, and improve quality of life for everyone in Santa Rosa.

The citywide land use classifications represent adopted City policy intended to achieve the community's vision. They are meant to be broad enough to give the city flexibility in implementation, and clear enough to provide sufficient direction to carry out the General Plan.

### ▶ CHAPTER GOALS

**Goal 2-1:** Ensure that growth and change serve community needs, protect the environment, improve fiscal stability, and enhance quality of life for all members of the community.

**Goal 2-2:** Promote city-centered growth and investment with a neighborhood-focused approach to create complete and connected communities that provide community members' daily needs within easy walking or biking distance.

**Goal 2-3:** Promote livability by creating a variety of housing types near transit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Goal 2-4:** Ensure that new growth and development are resilient to economic cycles and forces.

**Goal 2-5:** Foster sustained, inclusive growth that generates long-term, shared value in the community and creates economic opportunities for all residents.

**Goal 2-6:** Maintain vibrant, convenient, and attractive commercial centers.

### ▶ VISUALIZING THE CONCEPT



1  
Mixed Use Downtown  
Neighborhood



2  
Mixed Use Corridor



3  
Street Dining/  
Retail Activities



4  
Jobs-Training Balance



5  
Neighborhood  
Entrepreneurship



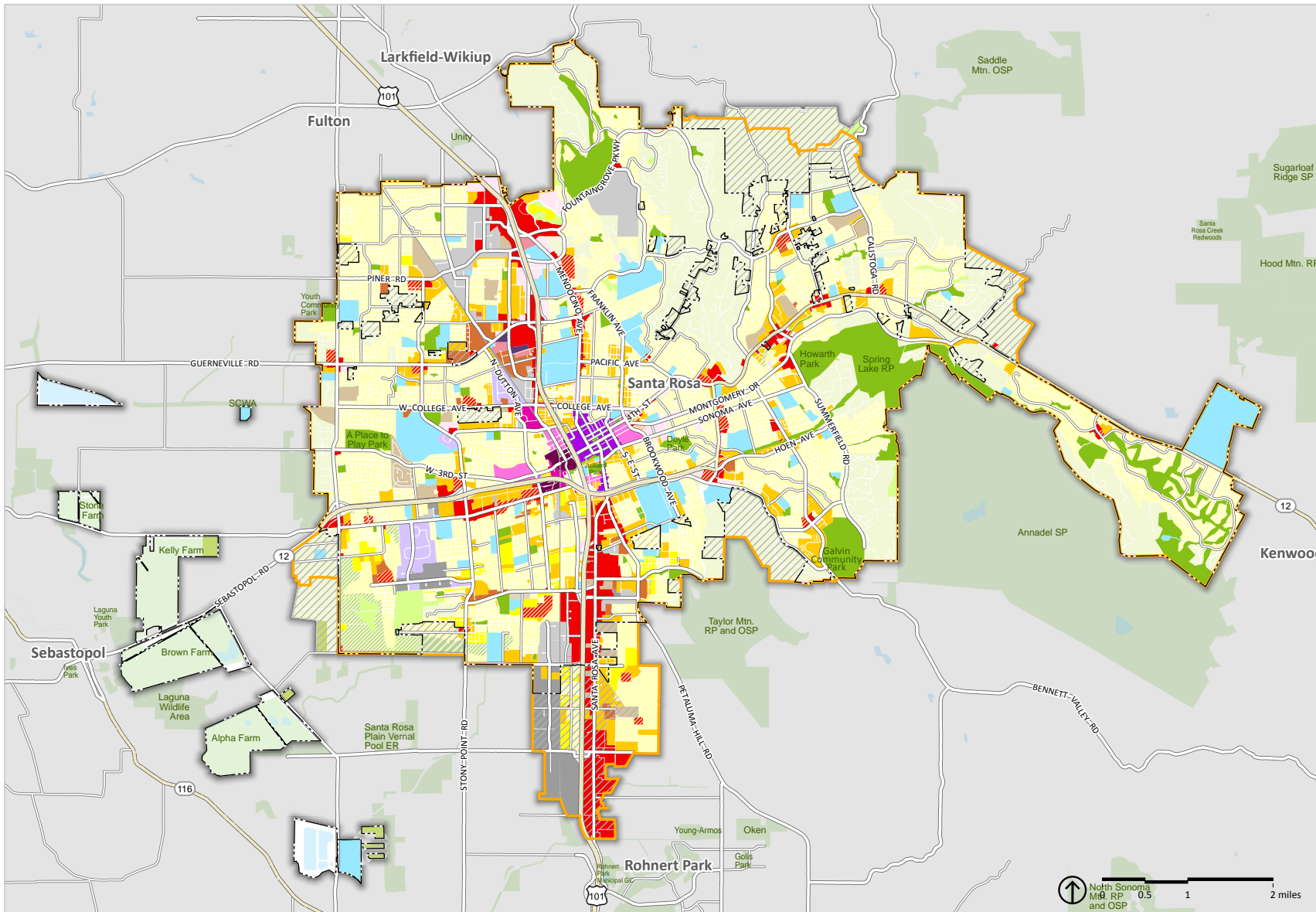
6  
Resilient Economic  
Growth

### ▶ NEW IDEAS

The following are some of the new ideas presented in this chapter:

- » Require construction measures that make exposure to air pollution less severe for development within 500 ft of Highways 101 and 12 (Action 2-1.3).
- » Support micro-entrepreneurialism, neighborhood-centered businesses and job creation, home-based businesses, mobile food and craft vendors, and community gathering events in all nonresidential zoning districts (Actions 2-4.6, 2-5.8, and 2-5.9).





### General Plan Land Use

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Land Use Designation**
- Country Residential
- Very Low Density Residential
- Low Density/Open Space
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Low Density Res
- Medium Density Residential
- Medium High Density Res
- Mobile Homes
- Retail and Business Services
- Retail/Medium Res Mixed Use
- Office/High Res Mixed Use
- Office/Med Residential
- PubInst/Med Residential
- Office
- Transit Village Mixed Use
- Transit Village Medium
- Station Mixed Use
- Core Mixed Use
- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- Maker Mixed Use
- Business Park
- Light Industry
- General Industry
- Public/Institutional
- Parks and Recreation
- Open Space
- Agriculture

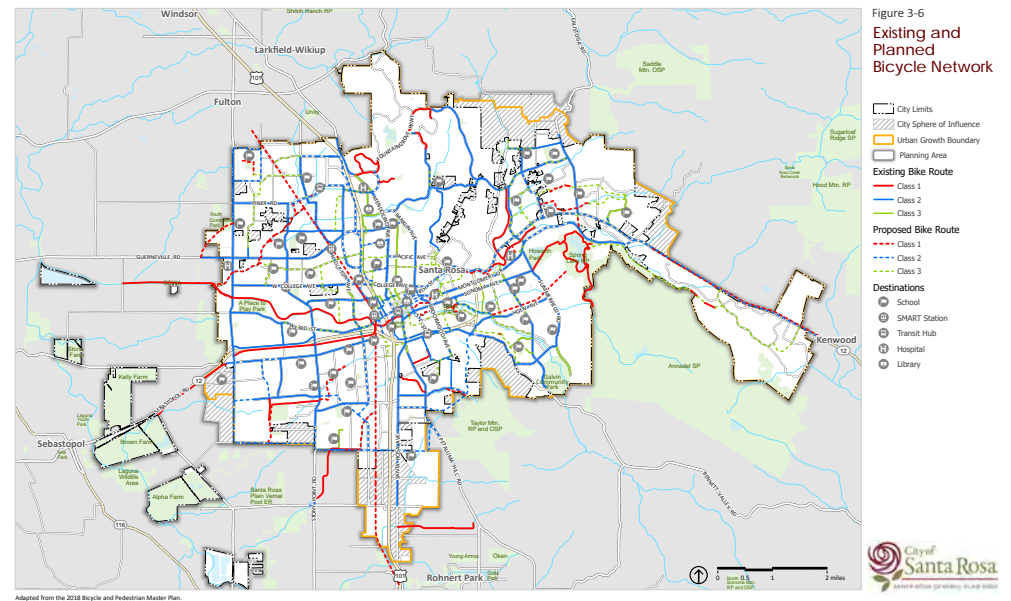
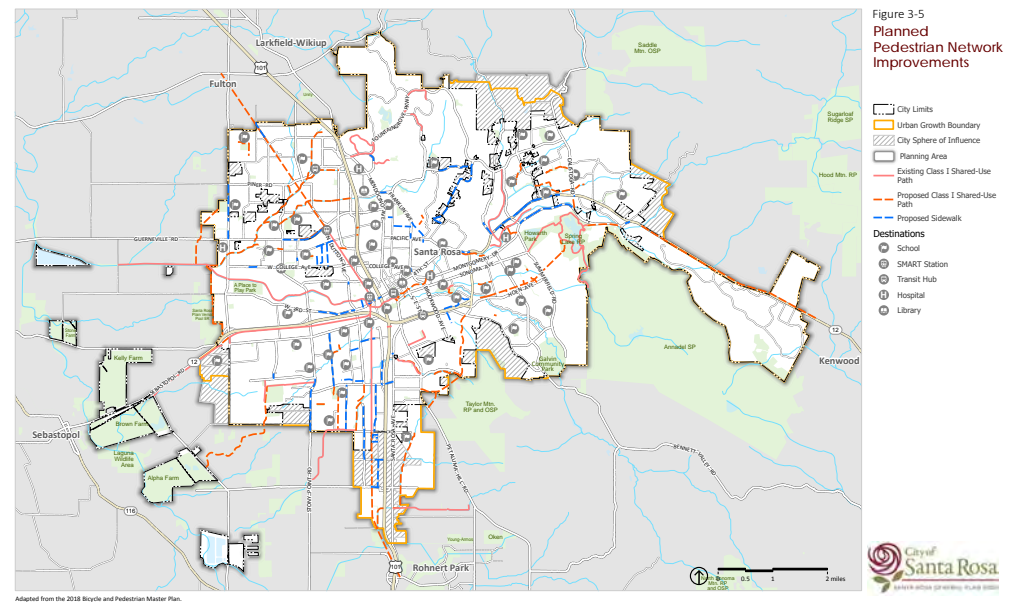
Source: City of Santa Rosa 2023

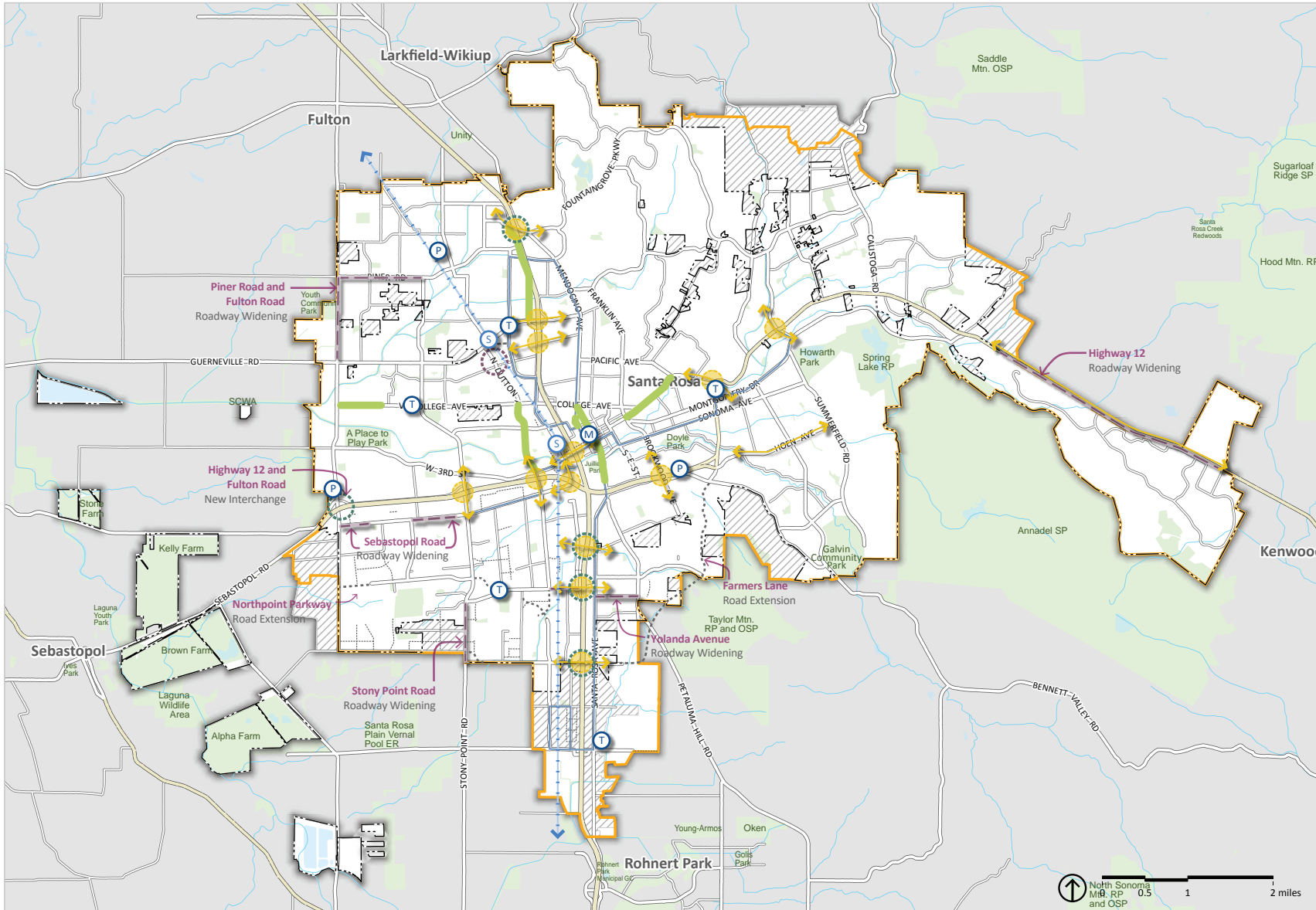
### 3. CIRCULATION, OPEN SPACE, CONSERVATION, AND GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION

Responsible management of the built and natural environments now and in the future is essential to ensure the well-being of current and future generations.

#### Circulation

The General Plan works to further expand the city's transportation options and support the mobility needs of everyone in Santa Rosa, prioritizing modes like transit and bike that minimize greenhouse gas emissions.





## Planned Transportation Network Improvements

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Creeks and Waterways
- Parks and Open Space
- Outside of Planning Area

### Transportation

- Highways
- Major Roads
- SMART Transit Center
- SMART Rail Line
- Transit Hub
- Transit Mall
- Transit Park-and-Ride
- Roadway Widening
- Road Diets
- New Major Roads
- New Minor Roads
- Improved Pedestrian/Bicycle Connections
- New or Widened Auto Overpass including Pedestrian/Bicycle Enhancements
- New Pedestrian/Bicycle Rail Crossing
- High Frequency Bus Route (10-15 min. headways)

Source: City of Santa Rosa 2023



## Open Space and Conservation

Open space in and around Santa Rosa offers multiple community benefits, including visual enjoyment, watershed protection, recreation use, and hazard risk reduction. General Plan 2050 guides City efforts to conserve (preserve and protect) resources, including the city's open space areas and air quality.

## Greenhouse Gas Reduction

This chapter provides goals, policies, and actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the transportation and energy sectors, which generate the highest shares of GHG emissions. Additional GHG reducing strategies are present in other chapters of the General Plan where topics such as land use and public services and facilities are addressed. The City's GHG Reduction Strategy, currently under development, will present all City GHG reduction measures in a comprehensive plan.

### ► CHAPTER GOALS

**Goal 3-1:** Provide an integrated land use and transportation system with safe and efficient movement of people and goods for all modes of travel that prioritizes reduction of transportation-related GHG emissions.

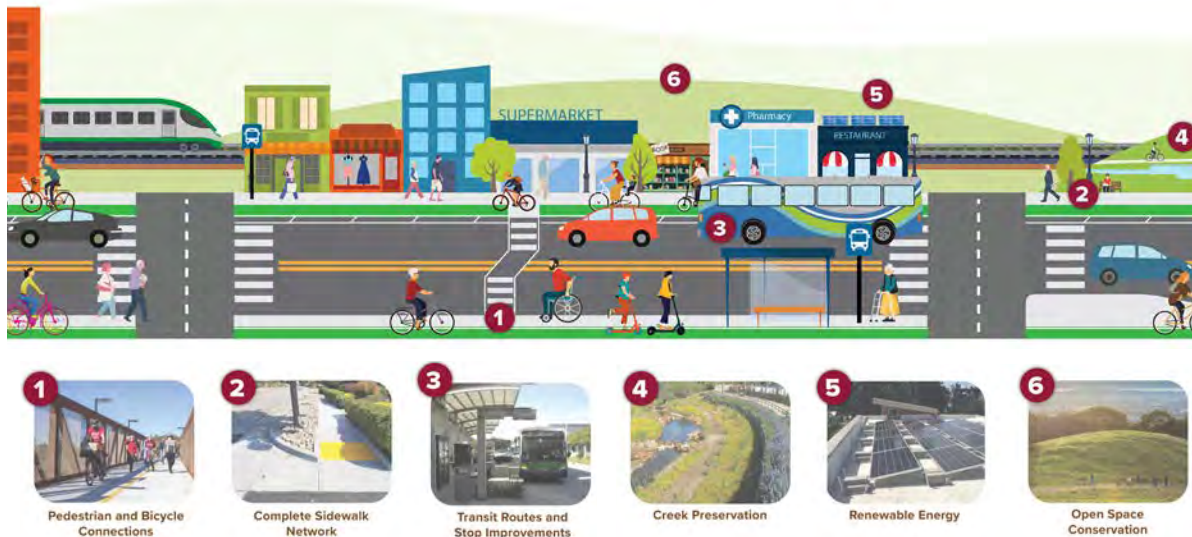
**Goal 3-2:** Provide a safe and accessible active and public transportation network that reduces dependence on single occupancy vehicles, prioritizing Equity Priority Areas and Areas of Change.

**Goal 3-3:** Ensure that traffic-related impacts of proposed land uses are evaluated and mitigated.

**Goal 3-4:** Protect, expand, maintain, and restore natural resources, open space, and agricultural land.

**Goal 3-5:** Achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030.

### ► VISUALIZING THE CONCEPT



### ► NEW IDEAS

The following are some of the new ideas presented in this chapter:

- » Prioritize transportation investments that support walking, biking, transit, carpools, and rideshares, especially in Equity Priority Areas (Actions 3-1.7 and 3-1.14), or areas that have been underinvested.
- » Continue to reduce parking requirements (Action 3-1.9).
- » Prohibit new drive-throughs (retail and services) and provide incentives to discontinue existing ones (Action 3-4.34).





BACK



## 4. URBAN DESIGN, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, AND ART AND CULTURE

Attractive design of buildings and outdoor spaces, cultural and historic preservation, and art in public spaces support a high quality of life and esteem for Santa Rosa residents and businesses.

### Urban Design

The City's urban design standards encourage development to highlight the natural and historical features of established areas, create distinct architectural identities in emerging areas, and protect views of the natural, unbuilt areas surrounding Santa Rosa.

### Historic Resources

Santa Rosa's historic resources include sites, structures, districts, and landmarks, marked by a rich architectural heritage, spanning many periods.

### Cultural Resources

Native American habitation in the Santa Rosa region began about 7,000 years ago. The city contains almost 200 recorded Native American resources and there is a high potential for finding more Native American sites in Santa Rosa.

### Arts

Arts have the power to connect people, promote cultural inclusion and diversity, create civic pride and a sense of community, stimulate the local economy, and inspire the creative spirit.



## ► VISUALIZING THE CONCEPT



Attractive Gateways



Hillside and Creek Preservation



Native American Heritage



Historic Preservation



Public Art



Placemaking

## ► CHAPTER GOALS

**Goal 4-1:** Preserve and enhance Santa Rosa's community character through attractive urban and environmental design and intentional development.

**Goal 4-2:** Protect the historic and cultural resources of Santa Rosa and enrich the sense of place and understanding of the city's history and prehistory.

**Goal 4-3:** Support an empowered, thriving, and inclusive Santa Rosa community connected through the power of art.

## ► NEW IDEAS

The following are some of the new ideas presented in this chapter:

- » Provide planting strips with large canopy trees between the road and sidewalk along commercial streets to support safety and placemaking (Action 4-1.5).
- » Remove obstacles for owners of historic properties to support preservation (Action 4-2.11).





## 5. SAFETY, CLIMATE RESILIENCE, NOISE, AND PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The beautiful environment that attracts people to Santa Rosa also creates potential risks from hazards such as fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, and slope instability that can harm people and property and cause economic and social dislocation.

### Geologic and Seismicity

The relatively flat valley floor adjacent to highland areas in and around Santa Rosa signifies the presence of active earthquake faults.

### Flooding and Dam Failure

Santa Rosa is in the Russian River watershed and has experienced flooding in the past. Rain events can overwhelm local drainages, especially the low-lying areas in the southwest part of the city, where critical sewer treatment facilities are located. Flooding can also lead to mudslides and landslides.

### Emergency Preparedness

Through the City's Know Your Ways Out evacuation portal, the Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other proactive measures, the City has taken proactive measures to prepare the community for an emergency event and is poised to respond quickly and efficiently in a disaster event.

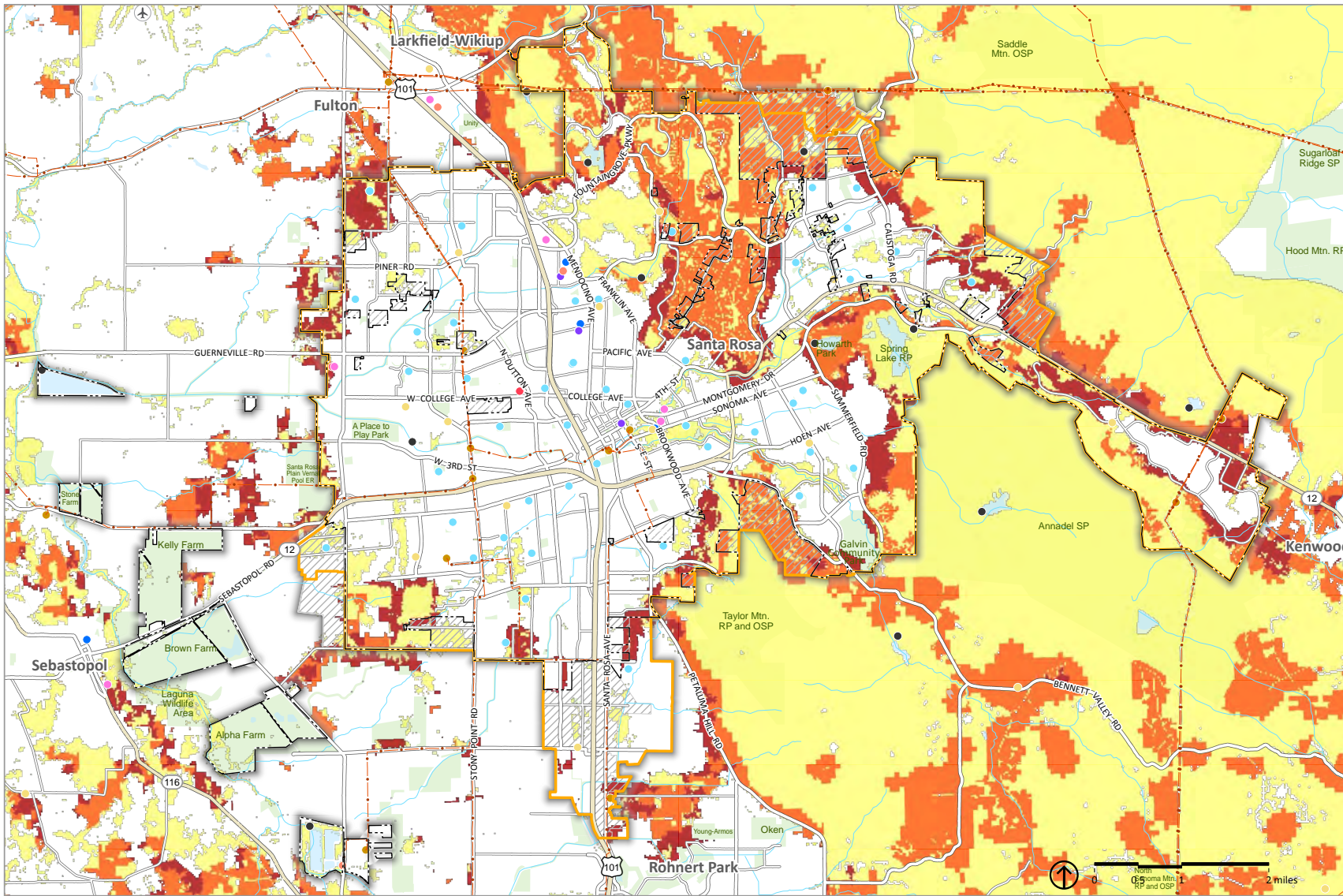
### Public Services and Facilities

The General Plan supports the City's ability to continue to provide superior public services and facilities for the community, including ensuring sufficient water supply to serve future community needs, facilitating ongoing cooperation with local and regional emergency responders, and expanding the City's efforts to focus policing on community-based solutions.





## Wildland-Urban Interface Areas



- City Limits
  - Urban Growth Boundary
  - City Sphere of Influence
  - Planning Area
  - Creeks and Waterways
  - Parks and Open Space
- Critical Facilities**
- Transmission Lines
  - Electric Power Plants
  - Electric Sub Stations
  - Fire Stations
  - Hospitals
  - Urgent Care Facility
  - Libraries
  - Schools
  - Local Law Enforcement Office
  - Dam Location
  - Airports
- Interface Zones**
- Not a WUI
  - Influence Zone
  - Intermix Zone
  - WUI Zone

Source: FRAP, 2015; CalOES, 2021.

## Hazardous Materials

There are hazardous materials throughout the community, and though their presence may not be a significant hazard, their release could harm plants, animals, and people.

## Climate Resilience

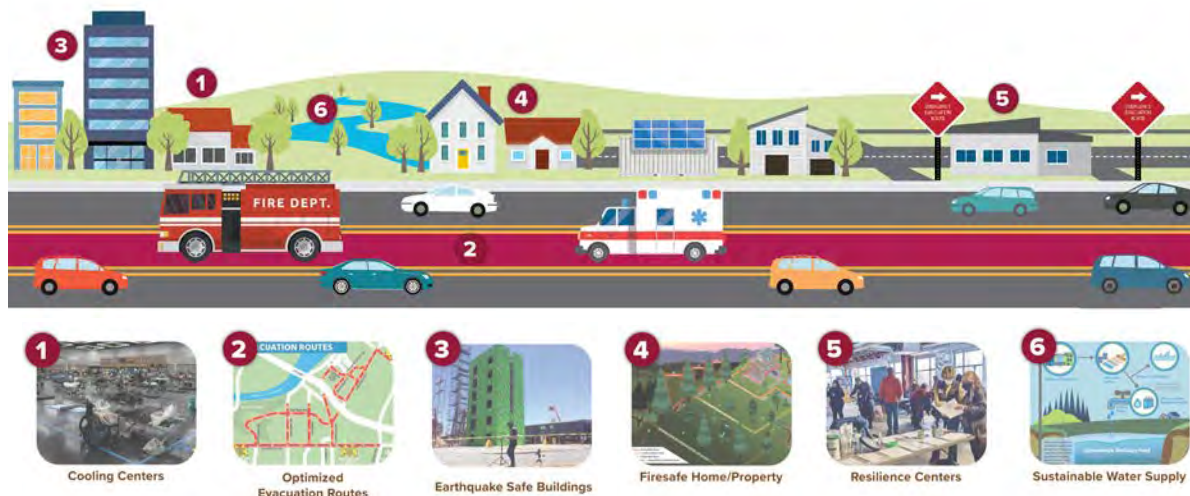
The climate crisis has severely impacted Santa Rosa, contributing to wildfires, droughts, extreme heat, severe weather, and threats to local agriculture. While General Plan 2050 works to reduce GHG emissions and reverse the effects

of climate change, effective hazard mitigation must simultaneously support the community's ability to adapt to and recover from changing climate conditions.

## Wildland and Urban Fires

Santa Rosa and Sonoma County are prone to wildfire that can be intense and uncontrollable—the area is especially susceptible in the wildland urban interface. The General Plan and other plans and City activities reduce the threat of fires and protect the community.

### ► VISUALIZING THE CONCEPT



### ► CHAPTER GOALS

**Goal 5-1:** Minimize community exposure to seismic and geologic hazards.

**Goal 5-2:** Effectively manage the potential effects of flooding and dam failure.

**Goal 5-3:** Increase community resilience to future wildfire threats.

**Goal 5-4:** Protect all community members and businesses from hazardous materials exposures and releases.

**Goal 5-5:** Santa Rosa is prepared for future emergencies.

**Goal 5-6:** Santa Rosa is a resilient city able to adapt to, recover from, and thrive under changing climate conditions.

**Goal 5-7:** Protect the community from adverse noise impacts that can decrease quality of life.

**Goal 5-8:** Provide adequate and high-quality city services for water, wastewater, recycled water, stormwater, and solid waste.

**Goal 5-9:** Help provide superior and lifelong educational opportunities for all community members.

**Goal 5-10:** Provide efficient and effective police and fire services for all members of the community.

### ► NEW IDEAS

The following are some of the new ideas presented in this chapter:

- » Create opportunities to proactively relocate existing development from high fire risk areas (Action 5-3.11).
- » Explore options to prohibit increased density of residential and non-residential uses in fire-prone areas (Action 5-3.12).







# 6. HEALTH, EQUITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Like many communities, Santa Rosa faces long-standing inequities and health disparities between certain areas and groups in the city. The General Plan identifies these issues and presents meaningful solutions.

## Health for All Residents

Santa Rosa is committed to maintaining and enhancing the health and quality

of life for the community by integrating “Health in All Policies,” a practice that incorporates community and individual well-being into decision-making across all City government sectors and policy areas.

## Food Access and Urban Agriculture

Access to fresh foods, whole grains, and other unprocessed or minimally

### ► VISUALIZING THE CONCEPT



Fresh Food Access



Affordable Housing



Language Accessible Goods and Services



Clean Air



Economic Opportunity



Park Amenities





processed foods is essential to good health. The General Plan identifies Healthy Food Priority Areas, where residents may lack access to fresh foods, to target efforts to meet the nutritional needs of these communities.

## Violence Prevention and Equitable Policing

General Plan 2050 includes strategies to enhance safety and make residents of all ages, races, and ethnicities, across Santa Rosa feel safe and welcome in the community.

## Parks

Santa Rosa features a wonderful network of parks offering a variety of recreation opportunities. But the City continues to work toward an ambitious target of offering 6 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, while maintaining and even enhancing the quality of existing parkland.

## Youth, Family, and Seniors

The City aims to enhance opportunities for young people, families, and seniors to enjoy a high quality of life with age-appropriate services and the ability to age in place.

### ► CHAPTER GOALS

**Goal 6.1:** Improve health and well-being for all community members by emphasizing community health in all City policies, programs, actions, and activities.

**Goal 6.2:** Advance health equity by understanding and addressing key social determinants of health.

**Goal 6.3:** Promote meaningful community engagement and empower residents through inclusive communication, outreach, and capacity-building to participate in City planning and decision making.

**Goal 6.4:** Maintain and enhance a culture of language access and justice in City communications and public participation in planning and decision-making processes.

**Goal 6.5:** Minimize risk of displacement and gentrification while ensuring housing is safe and sanitary for all residents.

**Goal 6.6:** Ensure that all households and individuals have convenient, daily access to affordable healthy food, including fresh produce.

**Goal 6.7:** Ensure community safety and foster neighborhood environments that are welcoming to all ages, cultures, races, and ethnicities.

**Goal 6.8:** Make parks the center for improving personal and community well-being.

**Goal 6.9:** Foster environments that support families and community members of all ages with high-quality, equitably accessible amenities, programs, and services.

### ► NEW IDEAS

The following are some of the new ideas presented in this chapter:

- » Ensure that every decision made by the City of Santa Rosa promotes community health, sustainability, equity, and environmental justice (Actions 6-1.3, 6-1.4, 6-1.11, and 6-1.12).
- » Restrict tobacco and alcohol sales where there is already a high concentration of retailers and near sensitive populations, such as near schools and senior facilities (Action 6-2.14).
- » Require convenience stores, supermarkets, liquor stores, and neighborhood markets to carry fresh produce (Action 6-6.2).
- » Require extra review for new chain restaurants and at least 300 feet between fast-food chains (Actions 6-6.7 and 6-6.8).
- » Allow all forms of urban agriculture (including rooftop, indoor, and other gardens) by right citywide and allow on-site produce exchanges and sales (Action 6-6.13).



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